

What is claimed is:

1. A method for operating a wallpaper printing franchise, comprising the steps of:

providing to franchisees, an on-demand printer comprising a cabinet in which is located a media path

5 which extends from a media loading area to a printhead and from the printhead to a dispensing slot;
the printer having one or more printer input devices which communicate with a processor to capture
data regarding one or more customer requirements, the data comprising at least a customer selected
pattern;

10 providing the franchisee with a collection of patterns in a digital storage medium that can be read by
the printer;

enabling the franchisee to print a roll of wallpaper, onto a web of blank media, on demand, according
to the selected pattern; and

obtaining or attempting to obtain a fee from the franchisee.

15 2. The method of claim 1, wherein:

the printer allows the customer to select a width;

the printer captures the width as data with a printer input device; and

the printer is used to slit the web to the width.

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3. The method of claim 1, wherein:

the printer allows the customer to select a roll length;

the printer captures the roll length as data with a printer input device; and

the printer is used to cut the web to the roll length.

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4. The method of claim 3, wherein:

the franchisee charges the customer only for the length.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein:

the printer acquires data from a touchscreen display which is also adapted to display the pattern to a customer of the franchisee.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein:

5 the printer is provided with a scanner for capturing data that specifies a customer selected pattern or other data.

7. The method of claim 4, further comprising the step of:

10 providing the franchisee with a variety of blank media types so that the franchisee may use any one of them in the printer.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein:

15 the franchisee is provided with one or more collections of printed swatches which correspond to patterns that the printer is able to print on demand.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein:

a customer of the franchisee can use an input device to alter how the printer prints a selected pattern.

10. The method of claim 8, wherein:

20 each swatch is assigned a printed symbol; and
the franchisee uses the symbol as an input by using a printer input device.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein:

25 the customer's requirements comprise a pattern and a configuration;
the configuration being one or more parameters selected from the group comprising: roll length, a roll slitting arrangement, one or more modifications to the pattern, or a selection of media to be printed on.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein enabling the franchisee to print further comprises:

30 providing the franchisee with a plurality of media canisters adapted to contain an unprinted web of media.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of:
providing a motor in the printer to advance the unprinted web into the path by
automatically threading the media through the printer.

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14. The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of:
loading the canister with blank media before providing it to the franchisee.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein:

10 the franchisee is provided, from time to time, with new patterns for customers to select.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein utilizing an on-demand printer further comprises:
loading a disposable media tote into a winding area adjacent to the dispensing slot;
winding a printed roll of wallpaper onto a core inside the tote; and

15 severing the printed roll on the core from the web.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein:

the printhead is a full width color printhead that prints patterns accessible to the processor.

20 15. The method of claim 1, wherein printing a roll of wallpaper according to a selected pattern further
comprises:

using a full width, color printhead to print onto the web while it is in motion along the path.

16. The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of:

25 drying the web after it is printed on but before it is dispensed by the printer.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein:

the franchisee is instructed to operate the printer for a customer.

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18. The method of claim 1, wherein:

the franchisee is provided with totes for holding cores which cooperate with a winding area of the printer at which area are located one or more spindles that support the core during winding.

5 19. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

enabling the franchisee to sell printed rolls as they are produced to eliminate printed wallpaper inventory.

10 20. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the web of blank media is printed by the printhead at a rate exceeding 0.02 square meters per second (775 square feet per hour)"

21. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the web of blank media is printed by the printhead at a rate exceeding 0.1 square meters per second (3875 square feet per hour)"

15 22. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the web of blank media is printed by the printhead at a rate exceeding 0.2 square meters per second (7750 square feet per hour)"

23. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the printhead has more than 7680 nozzles

20 24. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the printhead has more than 20,000 nozzles

25. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the printhead has more than 100,000 nozzles

25 26. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the printhead has more than 250,000 nozzles

27. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the printhead prints ink drops with a volume of less than 5 picoliters

30 28. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the printhead prints ink drops with a volume of less than 3 picoliters

29. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the printhead prints ink drops with a volume of less than 1.5 picoliters

5 30. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the printer is a self contained printer for producing rolls of wallpaper, the printer comprising:

a cabinet in which is located a media path which extends from a media cartridge loading area to a winding area;

a full width digital color printhead located in the media path;

10 a processor which accepts operator inputs which are used to configure the printer for producing a particular roll; and

the winding area adapted to removably retain a core and wind onto it, wallpaper produced by the printer.

15 31. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein utilizing an on-demand printer further comprises:

loading a media cartridge into the printer, the media cartridge, comprising:

a case in which a roll of blank media may be deployed;

the case having two halves, hinged together, an area between the two halves, when closed, defining a media supply slot; and

20 the case having internally and adjacent to the slot, a pair of rollers, at least one of the rollers being a driven roller which is supported at each end, by the case, for rotation by an external motor.

32. A method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising the step of providing a consumer tote for carrying the roll of wallpaper, the tote comprising:

25 a disposable exterior in which is formed a main access flap and a pair of core access openings; and the tote having an interior in which is located a disposable core which is aligned with the access openings.

30 33. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the printer has a transverse cutter, the transverse cutter comprising:

a chassis having end plates;
 the end plates being separated to allow a web of media to pass between them;
 the end plates supporting between them a cutting blade; and
 the blade supported at each end to perform a cutting motion which begins on one side of the web and
 5 finishes on an opposite side of the web.

34. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the printer has a slitting mechanism, the slitting mechanism comprising:

a chassis having end plates;
 10 the end plates being separated by a transverse portion of the chassis to allow a web of media to pass between them;
 one or more rotating slitting shafts extending between the end plates, each shaft having one or more slitters arranged along its length, each slitte having a cutting edge; and
 the slitting mechanism selectively engageable to either enter or not enter a path followed by the web
 15 according to an input provided by an operator of the printer.

35. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the printer has a dryer, the dryer comprising:

a compartment with a top opening for receiving a media web fed from the printer;
 a source of heated air located above the top opening for blowing heated air into the opening to dry
 20 printing on the media web.

36. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the printer comprises:

a cabinet in which is located a media path which extends from a media loading area to a winding area;
 a printhead located in the media path;
 25 a processor which accepts operator inputs from one or more input devices which are used to configure the printer for producing a particular roll; and
 the winding area adapted to removably retain a core and wind onto it, wallpaper produced by the printer wherein,
 the length and design of the roll are determined by the operator inputs.

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37. A method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

utilizing an on-demand printer comprising a cabinet in which is located a media path which extends from a media loading area to a winding area, there being a printhead located in the media path, a processor which accepts operator inputs from one or more input devices;

- 5 using one or more input devices which communicate with the processor to capture data from an operator regarding a specification for an operator's requirements;
- using the processor to operatively control the printer according to the data; and
- printing a single roll of wallpaper, on demand, according to a selected pattern.

10 38. A method as claimed in claim 1 for operating a wallpaper printing franchise, further comprising the steps of:

utilizing an on-demand printer comprising a cabinet in which is located a media path which extends from a media loading area to a printhead and from the printhead to a dispensing slot;

- 15 using one or more printer input devices which communicate with a processor to capture data regarding one or more customer's requirements;
- the data comprising at least a customer selected pattern;
- printing a roll of wallpaper, onto a web of blank media, on demand, according to the selected pattern;
- and
- charging a customer for the roll.

20 39. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the printer comprises:

a frame in which is located a media path which extends from a media loading area to a winding area;

a printhead located across the media path;

one or more input devices for capturing operator instructions;

a processor which accepts operator inputs which are used to configure the printer for producing a particular roll; and

- 25 the winding area adapted to removably retain a core and wind onto it, wallpaper produced by the printer.

40. A method as claimed in claim 1 for printing wallpaper onto a web of media further comprising the steps of:

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utilizing an on-demand printer comprising a cabinet in which is located a media path, there being a full width printhead located across the media path, there being a processor which accepts operator inputs from one or more input devices and which controls the printer;

using one or more input devices which communicate with the processor to capture data from an

5 operator regarding a specification;

running the printer according to the data;

printing a single roll of wallpaper, on demand, according to a selected pattern and configuration;

changing the pattern according to a new datum from an operator; and

then printing a new roll onto the same web.

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41. A method as claimed in claim 1 for drying the moving web of media in the printer, the method further comprising the steps of:

loading the web in a path that traverses a compartment in a dryer within the printer, the compartment having an opening across the top;

15 allowing the moving web to descend into the compartment, as required; and

blowing heated air from above the opening.

42. A method as claimed in claim 1 for supplying the media web to the wallpaper printer, the method further comprising the steps of:

20 opening a reusable case;

placing into the case a core onto which has been located a supply roll of blank wallpaper media;

supporting the core for rotation within the case;

leading a free edge of the roll between a pair of rollers and past an edge of the open case; then

with the rollers located within the case and on either side of the web, closing the case and loading it

25 into a printer.

43. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the printer has a printhead assembly which prints onto a moving web that follows a path, the assembly comprising:

a full width printhead located across the path;

30 the printhead comprising a color printhead which is at least as wide as the web;

the printhead being supplied with a number of different inks which are remote from the printhead and which supply the printhead through tubes.

44. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the printer further comprises:

5 a housing in which is located a media path which extends from a blank media intake to a wallpaper exit slot;

a multi-color roll width removable printhead located in the housing and across the media path;

the printhead being supplied by separate ink reservoirs, the reservoirs connected to the printhead by a an ink supply harness, there being a disconnect coupling between the reservoirs and the printhead;

10 one or more input devices for capturing operator instructions;

a processor which accepts operator inputs which are used to configure the printer for producing a particular roll.

45. A method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising the step of providing a consumer tote for

15 carrying the roll of wallpaper, the tote comprising:

a disposable exterior in which is formed a main access flap and a pair of core access openings;

the tote having an interior in which is located a disposable core which is aligned with the access openings;

both openings exposing a moulded coupling, one coupling attached to each end of the core, at least one

20 of the couplings being a driven coupling and adapted to engage a driving spindle that rotates the core.

46. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the printer has a removable printhead assembly which prints onto a moving web, comprising:

a full width stationary printhead located on a rail along which it slides for service and removal;

25 a number of replaceable ink reservoirs which supply the printhead with different inks;

the printhead comprising a color printhead which is at least as wide as the web; and

the printhead being supplied with the different inks through tubes which can be disconnected so the printhead may be removed.

47. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the printer is a self threading printer for producing rolls of wallpaper, comprising:

a media loading area adapted to support a media cartridge in a position so that a media supply slot of the cartridge is closely adjacent to a pilot guide;

5 a cabinet housing a media path which extends from the pilot guide to a printed media dispensing slot;

a printhead located across the media path;

a processor which accepts operator inputs which are used to configure the printer for producing a particular roll;

a motor within the cabinet for advancing a media web out of the media cartridge; and

10 one or more other motors adapted to urge the media along the path and out of the slot.

48. A method as claimed in claim 1 for producing wallpaper on-demand, further comprising the steps of:

utilizing an on-demand printer comprising a cabinet in which is located a media path which passes a

15 printhead on the way to a dispensing slot;

selecting a pattern and a configuration;

using one or more printer input devices which communicate with a processor to input the pattern and the configuration; and

20 printing a roll of wallpaper, onto a web of blank media, on demand, according to the selected pattern and configuration.

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